

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

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S E C R E T STATE 034552

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AO, US

SUBJECT:COMMENTS ON PALME'S ARTICLE ON ANGOLA AND CUBA

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REF: STOCKHOLM 644

1. SINCE PALME PUTS SUCH GREAT STORE ON THE FACT THAT THE CUBANS ONLY MOVED INTO ANGOLA ON A "MASSIVE SCALE" AFTER THE SOUTH AFRICANS INTERVENED, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT, IN FACT, THE CUBAN DECISION TO INTERVENE MASSIVELY WAS MADE IN LATE JULY AND EARLY AUGUST, BEFORE THE SOUTH AFRICANS EVER SENT FORCES INTO ANGOLA TO PROTECT A DAM SITE AND MONTHS BEFORE THEY REACHED AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE ANGOLANS TO JOIN THE FIGHTING ON THE SIDE OF FNLA/UNITA. FURTHER, THE INTERROGATION OF CUBANS INDICATED COMBAT UNITS LANDED FROM TROOPSHIPS, IN EARLY OCTOBER, BEFORE THE SOUTH AFRICAN ADVANCED INTO THE ACTUAL FIGHTING.

2. A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF THE CUBAN-SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT FOLLOWS:

PRE-1975 - CUBANS HAD LONG HISTORY OF TRAINING MPLA -- BOTH IN CONGO (B) AND CUBA.

JANUARY-JUNE 1975 - CUBAN ADVISORS AND TECHNICIANS (100-

200?) ASSIST MPLA IN THE FIGHTING.

JULY - MPLA ASKS USSR AND CUBANS FOR INCREASED ASSISTANCE.

AUGUST - CUBA AGREES TO PROVIDE LARGE NUMBERS OF COMBAT TROOPS AND BEGINS TO GEAR UP FOR AN INTERVENTION. SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES MOVE 40 KILOMETERS INTO ANGOLA TO PROTECT A JOINT PORTUGUESE/SOUTH AFRICAN HYDROELECTRIC SITE.

SEPTEMBER - VANGUARD OF CUBAN COMBAT FORCES ARRIVE. SOUTH AFRICAN BEGINS TALKS WITH UNITA/FNLA ON PROVIDING ASSISTANCE.

OCTOBER - CUBAN COMBAT UNITS CONTINUE TO ARRIVE. IN MID-MONTH THE UNITA/SOUTH AFRICAN OFFENSIVE KICKS-OFF (CUBAN INFANTRYMEN ARE CAPTURED IN THE EARLY FIGHTING, INDICATING THEIR PREVIOUS PRESENCE.)

NOVEMBER - AT INDEPENDENCE THE CUBAN AIRLIFT INTO LUANDA
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BEGINS. SEVERAL THOUSAND CUBAN COMBAT TROOPS HAVE ALREADY ARRIVED AND ARE DEPLOYED TO DEFEND LUANDA. SOUTH AFRICAN ADVANCE HALTS AT THE NORTHERN LIMIT OF UNITA TRIBAL AREA.

DECEMBER-JANUARY - CUBAN BUILD-UP CONTINUES WITH A STEADY INCREASE UP TO 12,000 TROOPS. IN MID-JANUARY, SOUTH AFRICA ANNOUNCES A DECISION TO WITHDRAW ITS FORCES BECAUSE OF

LACK OF SUPPORT FROM THE WEST.

FEBRUARY - SOUTH AFRICA ANNOUNCES A DECISION TO DEFEND A LARGE BUFFER ZONE IN SOUTHERN ANGOLA FROM INCURSION BY CUBAN TROOPS OR SWAPO FORCES UNTIL AN AGREEMENT IS REACHED TO PROTECT THE DAM SITES AND PREVENT GUERRILLA ACTIVITY INTO NAMIBIA.

3. THE POINT WE BELIEVE SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED IS THAT THE KBANS EMBARKED ON A PLAN TO PROVIDE LARGE NUMBERS OF TROOPS TO MPLA BEFORE ANY SOUTH AFRICAN ACTION. THIS WAS A CUBAN EFFORT TO IMPOSE A MINORITY REGIME ON THE GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA OVER TWO OTHER LEGITIMATE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS TOGETHER REPRESENTING THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION. THE CUBANS LATER USED THE SOUTH AFRICAN FIG-LEAF TO JUSTIFY AND CLOAK THEIR INTERVENTIONIST POLICY. INGERSOLL

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